



THE SPELL OF THE TROPICS



Randolph Atkin

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THE SPELL OF THE TROPICS

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THE SPELL OF THE TROPICS

SONGS OF CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA

BY

RANDOLPH H. ATKIN

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NOTE

THE word "Gringo" is used in Latin American countries to denote a foreigner, more especially an American or an Englishman. It has long lost its tone of depreciation, and in fact is often used now in terms of affection. There are many reasons given as to the origin, but the one generally accepted is that, years ago, during the war between the United States and Mexico, the American soldiers used to sing a marching song, namely, "Green grow the Rushes, O!" and the Mexicans—having so often heard this song sung by the victorious American troops when they marched into a town—twisted round the words "green grow" until they got the term "gringo." This word is now used all over Central and South America.

The Spanish words which appear in the following poems are those used by "old-time Gringoes," who have a colloquialism of their own.

THE AUTHOR.

FOREWORD

I 'VE penned these verses for my own amusement,
When I've been lonely on my travels wide ;
Hearing the challenge of a muttering jungle,
Or in the stillness of a bleak divide.
Lacking the flowery language of a scholar,
Crude in their naked telling—they won't bear
The nice dissecting of a sated public,
The penetration of a critic's stare.
But yet they speak of men—of tales related
Beside far camp-fires, through the long, long night,
Each pipe aglow—a silent, list'ning circle,
Revealed but dimly by the flickering light ;
When men are stripped of modern, false conventions,
And show their feelings as an open chart ;
When sham is worse than useless, each discerning
The inmost workings of the other's heart.
With such-like men o'er virgin trails I've wandered,
Sharing their hardened fare 'neath sun and rain,
Gripping the calloused hand of truest friendship—
Would that I were amongst them once again !
Yet, if by chance some of those loyal comrades
Should see these lines, and o'er one passage dwell,
Then I'll have reached the hearts of those who matter,
And fireside critics may go plumb to hell ;
'Tis only those who know the wanderer's weal
To whom these rhymes, unpolished, will appeal.

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THE SPELL OF THE TROPICS

THE SPELL OF THE TROPICS

I HAVE sweated for years on its seaboards,
I have suffered its hardships and pains ;
The germs of its jungle-bred fevers
Have drunk of the blood in my veins ;
The fruits of its sins have confined me
With the scum in a hovel to dwell—
Yet still, with my youth far behind me,
It holds me a slave in its spell.

Breaking the love-ties which bind us
To the well-favoured land of our birth ;
Turning our backs on its cities
With their millions, their pleasures and mirth ;
The ease and the comfort they proffer
With never a thought we forgo ;
Yet what have these countries to offer
In place of them ?—damned if I know !

For years upon end we are sweating
Neath a hundred or more in the shade,
And the money we get from our toilings
Is squandered as soon as it's made ;

With our bodies and souls we are paying—
 And the most of us surely are sane !—
 So what is the reason we're staying ?
*Quien sabe!*¹—ask me again !

But leave it, you hardened old-timer,
 Go back to the land whence you came !
 You'll find that the scenes of your dreamings
 Don't seem to you somehow the same ;
 You'll feel that there's *something* that's lacking,
 There's nothing the same as before,
 And it's then that your thoughts will go tracking
 Back to the tropics once more.

Back to those 'dobe-built houses,
 Where an olive-skinned people do dwell,
 To towns where the markets and byways
 Reek with a garlicky smell ;
 To lands where the perfumed banana
 Ripens each month of the year,
 And that ne'er-failing byword " *mañana* " ²
 Sounds sweet to an old-timer's ear.

Back to those lands where the dawnings
 Are poured from a seething hot mould ;
 Where the billowing crest of the jungle
 Is drenched in a deluge of gold ;
 Where quickly each mountain-peak hoary
 Changes its pallor of death,
 As the sun, rising up in its glory,
 Stifles the night with its breath.

¹ Who knows.

² To-morrow.

And what of that stillness at noonday
When the sky is ablaze overhead ;
When human and beast are a-dreaming,
And nature communes with the dead ;
When the sweltering heat grows oppressive
As the sun in its zenith holds sway ;
And the silence around so impressive
That somehow you feel you could pray ?

Those evenings—the jewel-piled mountains
With rivers of crimson a-flood,
As the sun, in its fury pulsating,
Sinks down in an ocean of blood ;
Soon the stars, in their millions, are paying
Their homage to Luna above,
And the scent-laden breeze, in its straying,
Whispers of God and of love.

Yes, leave it !—but when you are hearing
The roar of the city at night,
You'll picture a silence-filled pampa,
A red glowing camp-fire alight ;
Or you'll vision a coral reef gleaming
In the moonlight, death-pallid and calm,
And you'll listen again, whilst you're dreaming,
To the song of the pattering palm.

You'll be longing to look on the faces
Of those whom you've proven your friends ;
You'll be feeling the lure of those spaces,
Where the path of Eternity ends ;

THE SPELL OF THE TROPICS

There'll be *something* keep calling and calling,
You'll try to resist, but in vain—
So you'll pack up your bag, you old son-of-a-gun,
And hike to the tropics again.

THE OLD-TIMER'S LAMENT

I AM but a grim old-timer, whom they call a tropic
tramp,

I've been exiled now a score o' years or more ;
On the silent, stretching pampa I have pitched my tiny
camp,

And the jungle hum has blended with my snore.
From the cliffs of bleak Magellan to the sands of
Panama

I've aimless trod along life's devious ways ;
But to-night, through years forgotten, I hear calling from
afar

Those voices dear of bygone, happy days.

You wouldn't think to see me now and hear my rough-
neck speech

That years ago I studied for the law,
And marriage with a season's belle was well within my
reach,

Instead of which I'm hitched up to a squaw ;
In place of being Someone, with a flat on River-
side,

And a wife, who'd dress with most expensive taste,
I own a 'dobe shanty, and my dark unblushing bride
Wears the leavings of a dishcloth round her waist.

It's a low-down life for any man who has a skin that's white,

And how I've stuck it out I cannot tell ;
I guess it's just the Tropic Lure, which holds a fellow tight,

Compelling him his very soul to sell.

There are many others like me, who came out just for a spell,

Their youthful hearts with many hopes aflame,
But the country somehow "got" them—in a shanty now they dwell

With a dusky *chola*¹ girl who bears their name.

The sun has dropped from out of sight behind the forest wall,

The amber afterglow has passed away,

O'er mountain-top the moon is hung, a pallid, ivory ball,

And in the dark'ning grove the fireflies play ;

The beauties of a tropic land my lonely shack surround,

The forest murmur fills the scented air,

Yet I'd give the whole darn country for the subway's rumbling sound,

And a glimpse of dear old Broadway's nightly glare.

Just to watch those teeming millions as they tread that lighted way,

Just to listen for a moment to its din,

And to hear the ragtime music of each blazing cabaret—
Those rendezvous of virtue and of sin !

¹ Indian.

But my unlucky lot is cast upon another shore,
Where in the sky the Southern Cross's agleam ;
New York town is far behind me, with its hustle and its
 roar,
And the stuffy, smelly subway's but a dream.

The lure has entered in my blood, it's now too late to
 quit,
And I have lost all hope of going back ;
I guess my old-time bosom pals would surely have a fit
 If they should know I'm married to a black.
Well ! there's no telephone from old New York to where
 I am,
While long ago I cut each family tie,
So what's the good of wishing now?—it matters not a
 damn,
I'll be a tropic exile till I die.

THE CABARET DERELICT

THEY were "painting it red" at the Metropole, for
the boys had come to town
With a roll of greenbacks in their belts, and a burning
thirst to drown—
A quenchless thirst of the tropic kind, raised by a blister-
ing sun,
Where the living pay of each swelt'ring day by the sweat
of your brow is won ;
Where death is for ever your partner, and you never can
rightly tell
The night you may wake from sleep to find you've taken
a ticket to hell.

The big saloon was a blaze of lights, and there rose a
deafening roar,
For the gringo boys, as they mellowed up, were bellowing
out for more ;
Nan (the girl of the ready smile) was strumming a known
refrain,
And the "crew" were shouting the chorus strong, over
and over again ;
When a sudden hush fell on the bunch, and I turned
around to see,
And the whole saloon was a gaping crowd, staring
silently.

For up on the platform stood a man, weary and scarred of face,
And the rags he wore would have made a hobo blush from sheer disgrace ;
His scanty hair hung down his back, matted and streaked with grey,
And in his eyes was the frightened look of a dog who has lost its way.
The taloned claws of his shaking hand were clutching a violin,
Which he trembling raised in a sort of daze to a rest beneath his chin.

Then he drew his bow with the movement slow of a man who is spent and weak,
And, as he touched those well-worn strings, that fiddle it seemed to speak.
A titter of laughter had gone around, but sudden it died away,
And changed to a deathlike silence as the old man started to play.
The boys, who had ordered another drink, had somehow forgot their thirst,
While the magic spell of a something strange was sobering up the worst.

And as the music rose and fell I sat in a sort of daze,
While visions fair in the smoke-filled air floated before my gaze—
Pictures and scenes I had half forgot mustering to my view,
And memories when I believed in men, and thought all women were true ;

Thoughts of a day, when the world was gay in the dear
dead long ago,

Whilst there I sat like a wondering kid watching a
cinema show.

Then I plainly saw where a couple strayed in the hush
of an eventide,

One in the blush of red-blood youth, the other a radiant
bride ;

And their faces glowed with a love which flowed from
young heart's boundless store,

As hand in hand they smiling passed through life's wide
open door ;

And I seemed to hear, so sweet and clear, the toll of a
curfew bell,

Telling of Home, with its joy and rest, as the gathering
shadows fell.

Then the picture changed . . . and I sat in the midst of
a swell society show,

Where, up on the stage, the season's rage was wielding
a master bow ;

Each wondering face lost, for a space, its rank pretence
and guile,

As he drew from the strings that dream of things which
make life worth the while—

Of love and all that it stands for, of fame when the
fight is won,

Of sweet content, when the day is spent, and one more
task is done.

But, turning soon to a rollicking tune, I thought that I
stood within
The blazoned walls of a rendezvous of painted women
and sin,
And there in the midst, surrounded by those parasites of
shame,
That youthful rage of the season sat, enjoying his
fleeting fame.
His face was aglow with triumph, his eyes with a joy alight,
As the sounds of their drunken laughter rose up through
the revelling night.

And I clear could trace the black disgrace, and the in-
evitable end . . .
Soon forgot by the public . . . spurned by each fickle
friend ;
Losing the skill of his master touch . . . struggling on
in vain ;
Sinking down to the lowest depths . . . never to rise
again.
Abandoned by wife and those he loved . . . an object of
bitter scorn,
Begging his way howe'er he may . . . damned . . . for-
saken . . . forlorn.

Then closer he hugged the instrument, and the strings
began to throb,
And from the heart of that violin there rose a mighty sob :
The anguished cry of an underdog in the seething flotsam
cast—
Unheeded . . . unknown . . . just living alone with the
ghosts of a wasted past.

Always their presence to haunt him . . . with never
a moment's peace ;
Visions to mockingly taunt him . . . waiting for death's
release.

Then the music slowly died away, and when I lifted my
head

I thought that I looked on memory's grave, and the ashes
of hopes long dead ;

And it seemed that the crowd was thinking aloud their
thoughts as they sat aghast,

Searching their souls as they naked lay in the light of
the Truth at last.

The faces of roughnecks, seated around, in their calloused
hands were hid,

While Sue (the one of the cast-iron heart) was blubbering
like a kid.

And as for me—well, I didn't see, for the mist which
dimmed my sight,

The old man shuffling his weary way out to the blackened
night ;

Who he was, or from whence he came, has never till
now been guessed,

But I reckon he told us his tale of shame in the manner
that he thought best.

While it seemed that night that the appetite of the boys
had gone for drink,

As they drifted soon, from that gay saloon, to their
distant homes . . . to think !

MALARIA

WHEN the top of your head seems as if it would crack,

And you think there's the weight of a ton on your back ;
When you chatter with cold though your skin's burning hot,

When it seems if your bones were beginning to rot,
And you're feeling like h——, then it's certain you've got
A rousing good dose of Malaria.

There's a taste in your mouth like an egg at its worst,
And the stock of a brewery won't quench your thirst ;
With your joints all a-creaking you crawl into bed,
While ten thousand demons are pounding your head,
Till you rave 'neath the torture and wish you were dead—
You're sure in the grip of Malaria.

You pile up the blankets to try and get warm,
Yet shiver and shake like a leaf in a storm ;
Your head's like a furnace, your throat like a drain,
And your body's one racking, all-overish pain,
While burning hot needles are piercing your brain—
You're having a touch of Malaria.

You swallow quinine till you're blind as a bat,
As deaf as a post and as weak as a cat ;

MALARIA

At last you break out in a cold, clammy sweat,
Till the bedclothes cling tight to your back wringing wet,
Then you know for the moment you've settled your debt
With that bloodsucking demon Malaria.

If by chance you should see a poor wreck passing by,
Yellow of skin and a watery eye,
Bones all a-rattle, with lips turning blue,
Who gibbers and blinks like an ape in the Zoo,
Don't shoot the poor devil! . . . it's only he's due
For another attack of Malaria.

'Tis said when you die and arrive at the gates
Of Heaven's abode where Saint Peter awaits,
It counts not at all if you've squandered your time,
What sins you have done, or the depth of your crime,
You've a box-seat reserved with the martyrs sublime
If you've suffered on earth from Malaria.

BY MY CAMP-FIRE LIGHT

BY my camp-fire light, I am sitting alone
In the blackness of night—for the shadows have
flown,

And I'm hearing the song of the crickets—and the wind
through the jungle trees moan.

And beckoning to me from the heart of the fire,
There are forms that I see, that awaken desire,
Though the one with the eyes of an angel, alas ! had the
tongue of a liar.

Deep down in the glow, where the embers are red,
There are pictures that grow ; whilst high overhead
The moon looks mockingly down on the ashes of hopes
that are dead.

There are scenes of a year that will never return,
There are visions that cheer, there are mem'ries that burn,
There's the face of a silver-haired lady—for whose loving
kisses I yearn.

And voices begin whispering low on the night,
Comes an aching within, and a dimness of sight,—
O God ! how old memories' fingers are pulling my heart-
strings to-night.

But what is the use!—the past is the past,
I've played the game loose, and the die has been cast,
So I reckon a hole by the trailside is all that awaits me at
last

THE CALL OF THE TROPICS

OH! the sunset's in the palm trees, and their
feathery tops are swaying,
Across the purple-painted bay a cooling breeze is straying,
The old cathedral's tinkling bell, it seems to keep a-saying,
 Come ye back, ye wand'ring gringo from afar!
For the fireflies are a-glimmer, and the sky with stars is
 teeming,
And hanging o'er the ocean's rim the Southern Cross is
 gleaming,
While softer grows the jungle hum, which somehow sets
 you dreaming,
 And a-thinking there's no place like Panama.

In a bamboo-covered homestead, where the perfumed
 mango's growing,
You'll find a Panamanian maid, whose eyes with love are
 glowing,
That's where—back to her arms again—God grant it I am
 going,
 For she's the little girl who bears my name;
When in the silence of the night the little owls were crying,
And round about the 'dobe walls the trade winds were
 a-sighing,
It's then she'd nestle close to me, and pledge her love
 undying,
 And set again my surging blood aflame.

I'm weary of the city's roar, the subway's endless rumble,
Of living through a daily grind of selfish fret and grumble,
Why ! if this is God's Own Country, then its Hades for
"your humble,"

It's sure enough to drive a man insane.
But there's a land I know of, where the sun is always
shining,
Where people still find time to smile, and friendship's not
designing,
Where Nature runs a-riot—can you wonder that I'm pining
And a-longing to be back there once again ?

It's midnight here in old New York, the city lights are
glowing,
Along the endless glittering streets vast human tides are
flowing,
In dance saloon and cabaret the din is louder growing,
While Broadway's just one big almighty glare ;
But through it all I see those stars o'er Ancon shyly
peeping,
And searchlights from a tropic moon o'er land and ocean
sweeping,
While on the near-by shelving beach the phosphor flames
are leaping,
 Guess I'd rather be down there just breathing air !

Yes, leave it if you think you must, for that one long
vacation,
You've had your fill of tropic days a-swim in perspiration,
How gladly do you say " farewell," with grim determina-
tion
 To settle in your native land afar ;

But when from out the smoky sky a blooming drizzle's
falling,
And through the marrow in your bones the fever germs are
crawling,
It's then you'll see a sunny land, and hear its voice
a-calling,
 And wish that you were back in Panama !

TABOGA

DOWN in sleepy old Taboga, lazy dreaming by the sea,

With the yellow light of dawning on its shore,
Where the smiling bay awakens, from its cloak of darkness free,

As the ghostly morning mists are passing o'er ;
It was there we sat together, my *cholita*¹ girl and I,
When first we pledged our life's fidelity,
While the rising sun poured down its rays from out a
glassy sky,
On dreamy old Taboga by the sea.

Her skin was somewhat darker than what's worn by me
or you,

And she hadn't got the knowledge taught in school ;
But her soul was white and guileless, and her little heart
was true,

And she quick could tell a wise man from a fool.
She had no use for fashion,—just a yard of print or so,
And the rest composed of Nature's modesty,—
But she surely made it heaven for a lonely man I
know

In dreamy old Taboga by the sea.

¹ Indian.

When the blood-red sun was leaving to awake another land,

And the rays, departing, kissed the blushing bay,
In the sacred hush of short-lived twilight, silent, hand in hand,

Along that shelving beach we used to stray.

Across in distant Panama there tolled the evening bell,

While in the dusk she'd nestle close to me ;
Our lips would meet in one long kiss, as swift the darkness fell

On dreamy old Taboga by the sea.

Then hosts of starry legions quick would marshal in their camps,

As the Southern Cross revealed its guiding light,
While rivalling earth responded with the million tiny lamps

Of fireflies heliographing through the night.

Out across the mirroring waters sportive played the phosphor gleam,

Where Luna's searchlights passed caressingly ;
Low the wavelets crooned their chorus . . . and life seemed but a dream

In sleepy old Taboga by the sea.

But all is past and done with in the dear dead long ago,

And I'm sitting by my fireside far away ;
Where, deep down in the embers, as they glow and fade and glow,

I picture scenes which seem of yesterday.

Again we linger, she and I, where coral reefs entwine,
And like a child she snuggles up to me,
Her little head upon my breast, her tiny hand in mine . . .
In dreamy old Taboga by the sea.

The tropic sun still blazes down upon that distant shore,
Where lapping waves their ocean stories tell ;
But others hear their legends . . . and I'll listen never
more,
To the tolling of that old cathedral bell.
Where the restless fireflies signal through the night's
enchanted air
To the watching stars . . . that's where I long to be
When the moonlight's on the water . . . for my heart lies
buried there,
In dreamy old Taboga by the sea.

WEST COAST TRAMPS

PART of that wand'ring multitude of fools who go to sea,
Cast aside by a counter-tide, West Coast Tramps are we ;
From Sandy Point to Frisco Bay
We steer along on our weary way,
Far from our home and friends we stray,
Damned to eternity.

Making a different port each day, loading the whole night through,
Checking below in a stifling hold, where the devil himself would stew ;
Shouting aloud till your voice grows faint,
And the heat of your language curls the paint—
'Twould blacken the soul of a martyr saint
Handling a cargo crew.

Nursing a wheezy engine, sweating from every pore,
Rolling like hell in an oily swell, thirty degrees or more—
Full ahead !—Stop !—Fast astern !
Changing the speed at every turn,
Till you damn the bridge and madly yearn
To drink of the captain's gore.

At every stop the natives board, swarming on like bees,
Each with a score of kids or more, and a million breeds of
fleas ;

Monkey, parrot, and cockatoo,
Till the old boat looks like a floating Zoo,
With enough to stock and replenish too
The world's menageries.

Jogging along o'er a glassy sea, hugging a sun-baked
shore,

Watching the boiling streams of pitch from the gaping
deck seams pour ;
Off Guayaquil in dead midstream
Where Yellow-Jack mosquitoes teem,
Or riding it out with dropping steam
Where Valpo northerers roar.

By coral reef and hidden shoal we risk our lives for pay,
Which quick is spent on "rotgut" booze and seaport
wives of a day ;

For our countless sins we can ne'er atone,
The devil has claimed us for his own,
Yet, God ! when we stand before Thy throne,
Give us a chance, we pray !

OLD PANAMA

A RUINED old church tower, standing lonely by the sea,
And grey walls in the jungle, peeping out mysteriously ;
A little, old, weed-covered bridge, fast falling to decay ;
Dim traces of a highway where the green-backed lizards
play,
And over all the tropic breeze, which, straying to and fro,
Tells the story of the glory of those days of long ago.

How often, in the years gone by, I've lingered by that shore,
And fancied I was living in those stirring days of yore ;
The same old stars their loving beams down through the night did shower,
The same old moon rose slowly up behind the crumbling tower ;
The Southern Cross, symbolic like, hung in the sky above,
And at my feet the lapping waves were crooning songs of love.

Again the Spanish galleons at their anchors gently sway,
As treasure-laden mules start out across the Isthmian way

The 'customed round of toil is done, the day draws to a close,

When lover looks for lover, and Nature seeks repose.

The vesper bells are ringing, the faithful go to pray,

As, glowing red, the sun sinks down beyond Taboga Bay.

And then the sound of music on the quickened senses falls,

'Tis the singing of the evening hymn, within those cloister walls ;

Full tremulous it dies away ; a voice floats on the air,

As the old priest gives his blessing to those followers at prayer ;

The fiery furnace in the west has paled and fainter grown,

The short-lived twilight fades away, and Queen Night mounts her throne.

Along the moonlit pathways strange shadows come and go,

While fireflies in the thousands beneath the branches glow ;

Upon the scented forest breeze is borne faint from afar

The sweet decadent strumming of a softly-played guitar,

And near a barred *ventana*¹ a tiny hand is laid,

As a maiden silent listens to her lover's serenade.

And then I picture Morgan with his buccaneering horde
Stealing on that town in slumber, putting all men to the sword ;

¹ Window.

Again each leaflet trembles with the shrieks of those in pain,
And the under-bush is sated with the lifeblood of the slain ;
Again the west turns crimson as the flames soar high o'erhead,
And the festooned jungle shudders with the passing of the dead.

Long centuries have helped to dim the horrors of that night,
And Nature, in her beauty, hides the dastard scene from sight ;
But underneath each dripping leaf, long mouldering in the dust,
Lie the bones of thousands murdered purely for the sake of lust.
Now naught remains but ruined tower and walls, which, seming dumb,
Yet which cry to God for vengeance when His Judgment Day shall come.

THE TROPICS

NORTHWARDS 'long Pacific's coast from Punta-
renas Bay,
To Guatemala City, where the sweet marimbas play,
There lies a tropic country, where the forest birds are mute,
Where the beauty of the women is a thing of world repute,
And the men are famed for eating of the old for-
bidden fruit.

That's the land where towering mountains glisten white
with virgin snow,
And twilight ever lingers in the hidden depths below ;
Where torrents fall from out the clouds in countless
endless threads,
Where sluggish rivers meander slow along their festooned
beds,
And through the reeking, oozy swamps the stealthy puma
treads.

Within those brooding jungle walls the light of day is
brief,
While deadly fevers lie await beneath each dripping leaf ;
The priceless orchid grows unseen, and silences prevail,
Far remote from human touch, betrayed by beaten trail—
Only a wanderer's festering bones to tell their gruesome
tale.

It's a land of dusty cities, where a dark-eyed people
dwell,
And churches are as plentiful as cinders are in hell ;
Where life is free and easy, and good intentions fade,
Where there ain't no cast-iron morals, for a saint was
never made
Where the mercury hovers round about a hundred in the
shade.

Beneath a red-hot blazing sun they dream their time away,
And they leave until to-morrow what they ought to do
to-day ;
Where policemen dress in tatters, and the happy convict
sings,
Where beggars ride on horseback, and the flying cock-
roach stings,
Where blue-eyed niggers walk about, and centipedes have
wings.

It's the home of politicians, where men seldom can
agree—
The land of wailing donkeys and the tantalizing flea ;
There dusky lovers serenade and strum the old guitar,
And white-skinned gringoes congregate from many lands
afar,
Each with a manly heart of gold and soul as black
as tar.

It's a land where dread diseases are inhaled with every
breath,
And one is ever treading on the line 'twixt life and
death ;

But though you may forsake its shores of hardships and
of pain,
You'll hear that voice a-calling you, which never calls in
vain,
With the longing of a lover you'll return to it again.

THE YOUNG GRINGO

(With renewed apologies to the singer of “Young British Soldier.”)

YOU chubby-faced greenhorn, on contract just out,
I'm tired as the devil of hearing you spout,
So close up your face, whilst I tell you about
The things you must know as a gringo.

The first you must learn is to listen, not speak,
For the one thing we hate is a youngster with cheek—
Shut up from the first ; be attentive and meek
When you're next to a hardened old gringo.

Don't try to make out you know more than the lot,
For more than *you* know the old-timer's forgot ;
Remember ! you're only one pea in the pot,
And the rest of the stew is the gringo.

Don't grouch at the future, nor harp on the past,
Don't swear at the land where your lot has been cast,
For there's nobody here who is holding you fast,
And you'll sure get the goat of a gringo.

And now, from the start, don't mistakenly think
That to be a good sport you must gamble and drink
And play the darn fool ; to rise up—*not* sink—
Is the motto of every right gringo.

But, if you *do* gamble and never can win,
Don't damn at the dice-box, and kick up a din,
But keep your tongue silent, and switch on a grin,
And pay up your debts like a gringo.

When you [pick up some Spanish (as you will, without
doubt),
Don't look for occasions to sling it about,
And, if you *must* curse in it, whisper! . . . don't shout!
For the accent is bad of a gringo.

Don't think that love's river continually flows ;
But just take a tip from a fellow who knows,
And pay for the water for washing your clothes—
It's cheaper all round for the gringo.

Yet, when you have read this, you don't think I'm
right,
And, in spite of the caution, your love-thoughts take
flight,
Then take my advice, son ; wed something that's white !
It's best in the end for a gringo.

If you happen to take a fair damsel to dine,
Don't squander your money to put up a shine,
But order her beer (though she may ask for wine),
Or you'll sure be a fool of a gringo.

Now, if you must drink, my advice to begin
Is to stick to a whisky and soda . . . or gin ;
And never forget that the bottle *must* win,
For it's never been beat by a gringo.

So don't go on thinking your inside's a sieve ;
And now there's a piece of advice I would give :
If you ain't good, be careful! . . . and then you may live
To get your grey hairs as a gringo.

Be slow to offend, and reluctant to blame ;
Be quick to forgive ; and treat all men the same ;—
You must hold a Straight Flush in life's little game
To be worthy the name of a gringo.

THE IRRESPONSIBLE

I HAVE pitched camp in the jungle,
Where the Chagres waters flow ;
On the plains of bleak Magellan
I have couched down in the snow ;
I have lain and watched the tropic nights
Spew forth a million stars,
And shivered where Antarctic's lights
Go circling round in bars.

I have often wined and feasted
At the boards of famous men ;
And I've appeased my hunger
In a cholo's reeking den.
I've flirted with a dainty thing
All creamy-white and pink,
And loved her heathen sister
With a skin as black as ink.

I've one-stepped in a ballroom
With a thousand lights aflood ;
I have danced the native "cueca"
On a floor composed of mud ;
Fevered, toiled in many places,
Where the wheels of Mammon hum ;
And I've known those stretching spaces
Where the silence strikes you dumb.

I have mined up in the Yukon,
Where the snow-wrapped mountains frown ;
I have wielded pick and shovel
Down in swelt'ring Colon Town.
Once I ran a Christian Mission,
Teaching heathens how to pray ;
And I've helped to fleece the sailors
In a seaport, of their pay.

I have had a staff of servants
At my daily beck and call ;
And, as a "down-and-outer,"
I have learned to cringe and crawl.
Laughed in ecstasy in having
All that health and wealth afford ;
And I've shrieked aloud with terror
In a pauper's bughouse ward.

I have been the chosen leader
Through a wild, carousing night ;
I have crouched down, mighty homesick,
By the lonely camp-fire's light.
Caruso's voice has charmed me
To that fairy land of dream ;
And I've wakened in the blackness,
To a hungry puma's scream.

I have had those many ups and downs
Which on a man attend ;
I've got perhaps some enemies,
I might have made a friend.

THE IRRESPONSIBLE

So, here's to you ! whoe'er you be,
Old pal ! I wish you well ;
And, as regards my enemies,
I'll meet them all in hell !

I have risen up and fallen,
I have been both good and bad ;
I have made some tidy fortunes,
And I've squandered all I've had ;
I have drunk my pint of sorrow,
I have ate my peck of fun ;
So, when I come to think it out,
And all is said and done,
It strikes an even balance—
I am just where I begun.

THE SOUTHLAND

A WOOLER, in love with Creation,
Adrift from the day of my birth,
Allegiance I give to no nation,
The country I claim is the Earth.
From swamps where the Chagres is flowing,
Through jungles where fevers abound,
To wastes where bleak blizzards are blowing,
The mark of my footprint is found.

Perhaps you have never heard spoken
The name of the land that I mean ;
The heart of its wilds is unbroken,
The best of its beauties unseen.
There, mountains sheer upward are tow'ring,
To pass in the dimness from sight,
Whilst jungles, of vastness o'erpow'ring,
Are clothed in the blackness of night.

Each morn is a curtain combining
All works of God's wonderful loom,
Rare tints of the rainbow entwining
With those of a garden in bloom.
At even each mountain-peak hoary
With rivers of gold is aflood,
As the sun, still arrayed in its glory,
Sinks down in an ocean of blood.

Then stars in their myriads teeming
 Appear on the blackboard of night ;
Fair Luna, aroused from her dreaming,
 Bathes earth with a virginal light ;
Dark jungles and forest awaken
 From coma of sweltering day,
As rudely their slumbers are shaken
 By prowling brutes seeking their prey.

Pacific is endlessly crooning
 Its chant to the coral-bound strand,
Nature for ever is tuning
 The strings of a wonderful band ;
Each with the other full blending,
 Whilst chorus on chorus is piled,
Till loud to the skies is ascending
 A rapturous song of the wild.

That is the land, when you leave it
 You swear 'tis a final good-bye !
But somehow you fail to achieve it,
 You cannot, however you try.
For though it breeds fevers that rot you,
 And offers but hardships and pain,
Yet the Lure of the Tropics has "got" you,—
 You'll return to the Southland again.

HAVE YOU—?

H AVE you ridd'n 'cross a pampa, knowing nought
of limitations,
Alone with Nature in its wildest state,
And the silence was so awful you could hear the earth's
pulsations,
And your soul, unfettered, calling to its mate?
Have you stood upon a mountain, when the land and sea
around you
Seemed bounded only by Eternity,
Letting nought of care enslave you . . . living on what
Nature gave you?
If you have—then you may speak of Liberty.

Have you mushed across a snowfield where the Arctic
blizzard pounds you,
All silent save the north wind shrieking o'er,
Or broke trail in the tropics, where the jungle dense
surrounds you,
And you're woke from slumbers by the tiger's roar?
Have you shared your rice and *pollo*¹ with a savage
Indian *cholo*,²
Yet feasted with the aristocracy,
Brought deep passion's glow to faces . . . daughters fair
of diff'rent races?
If you have—then you have tasted Life with me.

¹ Chicken.

² Indian of the mountains.

Have you fought a fight unaided—a war with fever waging,

When comrades died like flies 'fore winter's blast,
Or tossed upon the ocean 'neath a southern typhoon raging,

And thought each shuddering plunge to be the last?
Have you felt your bowels sicken, and your parched throat quickly thicken,

When sand stretched out as far as eye could see?
Have you cursed a maddened cheater . . . famed as quick with his repeater?

If you have—then you have courted Death with me.

Have you known a girl you cared for, fully trusted, wholly revered,

The knowledge of whose virtues made you glad,
Then had your ideals shattered, your illusions widely scattered

By the action of a low-down selfish cad?

Have you spent your days in scheming, and your nights in fondly dreaming

Of a future based on true fidelity,

Then seen your mind's creation sink to depths of degradation?

If you have—then you have shared a grief with me.

Have you started madly drinking to prevent yourself from thinking,

And never for a year drawn sober breath,
Quickly drifting on the ebb-tide with the scum of every nation

To the borders of a low, degraded death?

Have you sunk past all forgiving . . . 'til you stooped
to earn your living

As "bully" in a den of infamy,
With mem'ries old to haunt you . . . ambitions lost to
taunt you?

If you have—then you have passed through Hell
with me.

Have you sat beside your camp-fire, list'ning to a puma
crying,

Through the blackness of a startled tropic
night,

And pictured scenes familiar in the embers quickly
dying,

Which brought betraying dimness to your sight?

Have you rolled up in your blanket, sorely aching, cold
and hungry,

With naught betwixt your couch and heaven's
dome?

Have you lain for months unending, sick, with strangers
to you tending?

If you have—then you have learnt to value
Home.

Have you had your little homestead nestling in a fertile
valley

Where the winds of frenzied Nature never blow,
And seen the sated cattle come deep-lowing to the
barnyard

Through the meadows where the orange blossoms
grow?

Have you heard the bellbird chiming, and watched bright
Saturn climbing

O'er the distant palms when sweltering day has
flown,

Then thought with fervent pity of tired dwellers in the
city?

If you have — then sweet Contentment you have
known.

Have you stood beneath a mango, while the early breezes
straying

Sang to the rising sun a welc'ming tune?

Or watched the flittering fireflies 'neath the spreading
branches playing,

And heard the puma heralding the moon?

Have you lived with your *cholita*¹ in a rudely built *casita*,²
The walls of bamboo and the floor of mud,

And, though now you own a mansion, still you crave for
more expansion?—

Then the Tropic Lure has entered in your blood.

¹ Indian girl.

² Hut.

MANILA BAY

DOWN on far Manila Bay, where 'tis blistering hot
by day,
Where at night the sky's a-glitter and the cooling breezes
stray,
Where the earth and ocean sparkle beneath a milk-white
moon,
Watching the tapering palm trees their feathery branches
prune,
Guards of that surf-drenched coral, where snow-capped
breakers croon ;

'Twas there that first I saw her in the glow of the sunset
light,
And what she wore would have caused her to blush if
she'd been white ;
But *she* was devoid of learning—that of the highbrow
kind.
Her modern, silk-gowned sisters would have surely called
her blind ;
She was only a little heathen, with a heathen's childlike
mind.

When the sweltering day was over, and the hush of even
fell,
By that circling shore we'd linger, list'ning to Aloa's
bell ;

Then th' moon, as a water lily, would rise from out the bay,
Across the mirroring harbour Manila's lights would stray
To where, beside me, unashamed, my dark-eyed sweetheart lay.

Our home was built of bamboo, with the floor of sand and mud,
But a man's not too particular when the lure is in his blood ;
In the mystic hum of tropic night, when stars glowed bright above,
Wrapped in dreams I'd hear her sigh, soft as a cooing dove,
And feel her arms around me twine. . . . God ! but she sure could love !

Yet life brings many changes—those care-free days are done,
Grey, grimy walls surround me, hiding the noonday sun ;
For I am back in New York Town, where the slaves of Mammon dwell,
Freedom's sons ! . . . yet many a one ready his soul to sell,
Hustle and bustle . . . dollar mad . . . and they call it living . . . Hell !

THE UNCLEAN MAN

ROBED like a beast of its freedom,
Spurned by my fellow-men,
By all forgot I am left to rot
Within this loathsome den ;
Never from pain to know relief
Till under the ground I'm laid,
And all on account of a fool's belief
In the word of a heartless jade.

Only a few short years ago
To this cursèd land I came ;
Strong with the rich red blood of youth,
Stirred by ambition's flame ;
But the luring Southland smiled on me,
Drawing me to her breast,
Till I soon forgot the vows I'd made,
And drifted on with the rest.

Oh ! those drowsy days and those dreamy nights
Of music, laughter, and love,
When the breeze in the palm trees sang its song
To the listening stars above.
I was the chosen leader then
Of a harum-scarum band,
Treading the broad, straight road to hell,
Yet failing to understand.

And what of those friends of yesterday?
 They have left me one by one—
 Each of them happy, having no doubt
 The love of a woman won.
 Lucky they were—for it ended there
 When they loved, and paid the fee ;
 Whilst I with my life, for one foolish hour,
 Must pay the penalty.

In a far-off land there's a girl I know,
 Whose scorn would be ill to see ;
 Only to think that those lovelit eyes
 Shone with a pride in me !
 Yet I wouldn't be counted worthy now
 To lie like a dog at her feet,
 With my body a temple of hideous sin,
 Unfit for the worms to eat.

There's a little tendril of golden hair,
 A ring, and a tiny glove,
 The faded leaf of a blood-red rose—
 Each with its tale of love ;
 When the sickly scum lie down to sleep,
 And the reign of the night's begun,
 I take them out of their hiding-place,
 And kiss them one by one.

That was the rose in which that night
 She hid her blushing face ;
 This is the ring she gave to me
 When I won in the college race ;

I picture still that well-dressed crowd
As their cheering rent the air—
(God ! but the groans of this dying man
Are more than I can bear !)•

Never again to feel the thrill
Contained in a lover's kiss !
Never to know a father's pride
In a home and its world of bliss !
Not even, the faintest ray of joy
Enters these precincts vile—
Why ! I'd give the rest of my wretched life
For just one friendly smile !

Only to look on the faces again
Of those who have held me dear !
To feel the grip of a comrade's hand,
And to hear a word of cheer !
For I die a thousand deaths each day
Here, in this fetid hole—
O God (if ever a God there be),
With grief I have saved my soul !

That was the tale of the unclean man,
As he stood by the wardroom bars,
Watching with sorrowing, tear-filled eyes
The far-off gleaming stars ;
Tortured and ever despairing
Till that fast approaching time
When they carried him out to a grave apart,
And buried him deep in lime,

COLON

O N a patch of mud and sand
Live a small perspiring band,
Who mourn their fate as slow the years roll on ;
They're a sweating, thirsty crew,
Who have learned to ever rue
The day they "cast their anchors" in Colon.

Now this particular spot,
By the sun baked scorching hot,
Looks out upon the broad Caribbean Sea,
Up from which a cooling breeze
Comes to sway the palma trees
As the moon from her day-prison rises free.

And the wide, expansive bay,
Heated by the glare of day,
Each night puts on a cloak of fleecy down,
While the "crew" on shore awake
With fierce burning thirsts to slake
In wet saloons which overflow the town.

In those blazoned booze resorts
Men are met of many sorts—
There's the Tourist green, the Toiler, and the Bum ;
Ev'ry man shouts when he speaks,
While the atmosphere foul reeks
With whisky, planter's punch, and fiery rum.

A piano's tinkling sound,
 Fills the stifling air around,
 Then a woman's voice pipes forth a well-known song,
 While the chorus, strong and free,
 Sung in doubtful harmony,
 Proves the lungs which to those revellers belong.

Near across the moonlit way
 Stands a club upon the bay
 Where you'll meet the Exiled Gringoes of the Zone,
 Angels' wings they'll never wear,
 Yet they've hearts beyond compare,
 And as men true to their friends they stand alone.

They won't ask your race or creed,
 If you're of a manly breed
 That's enough for them—they'll take you by the hand ;
 And to be a landed lord
 No advantage would afford,
 It's men they seek, not titles, in that land.

If by chance their aid you claim,
 They won't study class or name,
 If a "stranger" then a helping hand they'll lend :
 They are GENTLEMEN right through,
 They are whites of whitest hue ;
 You'll be proud, like I, to call each one your friend.

In that land you'll get to know
 Of a place called Navaho,
 Where the Birds of Paradise have built their nests.
 As you walk its crowded street
 Many sounds the ear do greet—

Music, singing, laughter loud at shady jests.

In those painted faces there
 Lurks dark mis'ry past compare,
 Though those Birds of Paradise seem always gay—
 It's a smile they've got to keep,
 Yet they'd give their lives to weep,
 As the loathsome mire engulfs them day by day.

And a noisy dance saloon
 Sends up screeches to the moon,
 Near a betting-booth where "sharks" a harvest reap.
 While a fetid Hindoo pen
 Hides from sight an opium den
 Where drugged and senseless men and women sleep.

These are entertainments found
 As you walk the patch around—
 Can you wonder how men often go astray?—
 In those pits of sordid vice,
 Where all things have got their price,
 And a man his monthly earnings throws away.

Working hard throughout the day,
 Drinking deep the night away,
 Fast they tread the path towards the panteòn.¹
 But, though each man's steeped in sin,
 Yet sweet Paradise he'll win,
There are Seats Reserved for dwellers in Colòn.

¹ Pantheon.

SOUTH OF PANAMA

DO you know those infant nations lying south of
Panama,

That dreary coast of stretching scrub and sand ?
Have you felt their lure upon you, breathed the fever-
laden air ?

Have you heard them call and tried to understand ?
Have you gripped the hand they proffer, do you know the
life they offer ?

'Tis one in which with death you ever spar,
The blazing heat that blinds you, the something strange
that binds you
To those small republics south of Panama.

Do you know those yellow pampas undulating to the
skyline,

Where the king of desolation reigns supreme ?
Have you heard the vultures croaking as you staggered
forward choking,

And watched with bloodshot eyes the mirage gleam ?
Have you fell to madly raving, chewed your belt to ease
your craving,

As you clear recalled that rippling brook afar,
And, though now you're back in clover, long again to
wander over
Those sun-baked countries south of Panama ?

Do you know those dusty cities with their narrow, crooked
byways,

Adobe houses dim as prison cells,
Those open market-places thronged with black perspiring
faces,

The rotting fruit and reeking garlic smells?

Have you heard the *burro*¹ wailing, loud the tropic morn
assailing,

And clanging bells which on the senses jar,
Then known that hour redeeming, when at noonday all
are dreaming

In those sun-bathed countries south of Panama?

Do you know their lovely daughters, those stately
señoritas,

Who with a perfect grace go gliding past,
And give you glances fleeting 'til your pulses fast are
beating,

And at such beauty rare you stand aghast?

Have you heard that rippling laughter? Seen beneath a
fringed mantilla

Two flashing eyes which pale the brightest star?

Do you feel a lover's yearning, do your thoughts keep oft
returning

To those sun-kissed countries south of Panama?

Have you seen those tropic evens when the heated earth's
a-glowing

And clouds are lined with tints of ev'ry hue—
When the sun, its blood pulsating, lingers not o'er its
leavetaking,

But soon 'neath old Pacific drops from view?

¹ Donkey.

Then the Luna, newly risen, pale-faced, from her daily prison,

Looks down from off the tow'ring peaks afar,
And brings some relaxation to the gasping population
Of those sun-scorched countries south of Panama.

Have you known those nights of splendour when ten thousand stars are sparkling

Like fireflies in the blackness overhead,

Watched the wavelets inland creeping, and the flames of phosphor leaping

Where th' changeful sea with steadfast shore is wed?

Have you—turned to silent wonder—seen the Southern Cross appearing

A pendant bright beyond the harbour bar,

And, through dangers dire to steer you, somehow felt that God was near you

In those sun-steeped countries south of Panama?

I have roamed their rugged seabords, ridden o'er their barren pampas,

I have trod their city byways, drenched in sweat;

To the puma's scream I've wakened, by their deadly fevers shaken,

To each of their demands I've paid my debt.

But though Fortune's tide has borne me from that land of stern adventure

To a country where the joys of comfort are,

And where life is of the choicest, yet I hear the luring voices

Of those distant countries south of Panama.

ON THE WAY TO BOGOTA

Up the river Magdalena, on the way to Bogotá,
In a little grimy steamer smelling strong of grease
and tar,
With the paddle wheels a-chunking through the waters
high in flood,
Breaking through the noonday silence, stirring up the
slimy mud,
Groaning engines ever pounding with a loud nerve-racking
thud.

Dodging floating rafts and dug-outs, skirting hidden shoal
and bar,
Steaming forward, often stopping, backing with a sudden
jar;
Waking up the sleeping 'gator from its sun-baked muddy
bank,
Driving back the squirming rattler through the rushes
growing rank,
Bringing forth the croaking bull-frog in the marshes
reeking dank.

Underneath the coloured awning sit the passengers and
crew,
Sleeping half and half awakened in the broiling heat they
stew,

All attempts at conversation deep depression holds in check ;
Each surveys the tar in streamlets oozing from the warping deck,
Each, with curses, wipes the sticky perspiration from his neck.

Past the interlacing borders with a thousand colours gay,
Where all Nature lies a-dozing through the stagnant heat of day,
'Neath that blazing sun's oppression all is lifeless, all is dead ;
Hissing snake and prowling panther each has sought its 'customed bed,
Nought is heard except the humming of mosquitoes overhead.

Sighting now an Indian village raised from off the river's silt,
Where the naked piccaninnies wallow in the reeking filth,
Steaming on—aroused from dozing by the steamer's strident blast,
Yawning—cursing—gasping—sweating, till the scorching day is past,
And the sun, its heat exhausted, sinks beyond the forest vast.

Up the river Magdalena, on the way to Bogotá,
When the sun in wondrous splendour shoots its last rays from afar,

Over hill and tow'ring mountain, where alone the wild
goats bleat,
Over soggy swamp and valley, where the steaming waters
meet,
Piercing through the festooned jungle to the puma's
dark retreat.

Soon the river turns to golden 'neath the sunset's ruddy
glow,
Changing to a burnished copper as the sun sinks further
low,
While the steamer ploughing onward leaves behind a
glitt'ring streak
Till it turns and seeks the shelter of a near-by hidden
creek,
Falls that hush of tropic even when 'tis sacrilege to
speak.

Quick the sombre shadows deepen and the night comes
swiftly on,
Spreading wide its cloak of darkness ere the final rays
have gone,
Then arises drowsy Nature from its coma deep of day,
Flitt'ring fireflies in the thousands round the river borders
play,
Roaring beasts and chatt'ring monkeys in the forest hold
their sway.

From the soft decadent rumble of the swiftly flowing
stream,
To the screamings in the distance, where the puma reigns
supreme,

Many sounds wake up the stillness, falling on the list'ning
ear,
Some to sadden—most to frighten—only one, alas ! to
cheer,
'Tis the strains of "Annie Laurie" from the drunken
engineer.

When at last, from sheer exhaustion, he "lays himsel' to
dee,"
You spread your trav'lling camp-bed 'neath the top-deck
canopy,
Hid within the hanging foldings of a thick mosquito net,
Musing half and half a-dozing through the stifling night
you sweat,
Trying hard, with bygone mem'ries, present suff'rings to
forget.

HOMESICK

WHEN you wake up at dawn with a weight on your chest,
And you gaze to the East though your trail it lies West,

When your appetite's gone and you curse without zest,—
You're homesick, poor gringo, you're homesick.

As you slow wind your way o'er that mountainous track,

In the trees, by the roadside, deep notches you hack,
You swear to erase them the day you turn back,—
You're homesick, gringito, you're homesick.

When you've got a bad grouch and the cause you can't tell,

When you hate e'en the name of the land where you dwell,

And you wish all the country and natives in hell,—
You're homesick, old growler, you're homesick.

When the sweltering heat steeps your eyebrows with sweat,

And the *poncho*¹ clings tight to your back wringing wet,
Then you think of a winter at home with regret,—

You're homesick, old fellow, you're homesick.

¹ Riding cloak.
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From the breaking of dawn till the closing of day,
Not a man nor a beast 'cross your pathway does
stray,
Then you think of the populous Strand or Broadway,—
 You're homesick, poor beggar, you're homesick.

When the sun ends the day as its labours have
ceased,
Then you watch that grey veil rising faint in the
East,
While your troubles you tell to your wondering beast,—
 You're homesick, Caramba ! you're homesick.

By the glowing camp-fire as you sit through the
night,
What visions of homeland arise to your sight,
Ah ! what pictures you see in that flickering light,—
 You're homesick, old-timer, you're homesick.

Then your mother's dear face looks out from the
glare,
The smoke takes the form of your sweetheart so fair,
And voices of friends whisper low on the air,—
 You're homesick, poor devil, you're homesick.

When your eyes they grow dim and you heart aches
within,
And a lump you can't swallow sticks under your chin,
How you curse at your fate till your soul's steeped
in sin,—
 You're homesick, poor gringo, you're homesick.

HOMESICK

At last, fast asleep in the moonlight's cold beams,
Now deadened your ears to the puma's wild screams,
You're happy once more, . . . you've returned, in your
dreams,
To the land of your birth, homesick gringo.

PANAMA

(With apologies to the singer of "Mandalay.")

I 'M tired of endless avenues, I'm sick of countless
streets,
Where wand'ring round from morn till night a friend one
never meets ;
The hustle, noise, and bustle on my fevered senses
jar,
Oh, send me where no subways run, nor elevators
are !

Down in swelt'ring Panama,
Where the exiled gringoes are,

And temptations are so plentiful they make a man
or mar—

Down in dreamy Panama,
'Neath the equatorial star,

Where, gleaming bright, hangs low at night the Southern
Cross afar.

There's a girl I'm mighty fond of, and her skin's a dusky
hue,

Yet she knows what's right and proper just the same as
me or you ;

Though her colour's not admitted into high society,
Yet she'd shame some whiter sisters with her true
fidelity.

With a true fidelity
She is waiting there for me,
Looking out upon the bosom of that old Pacific sea,
Down in swelt'ring Panama . . .

When the blood-red sun was dipping down beyond Taboga
Bay,
Along that strand of coral hand in hand we used to
stray,
And we'd linger till the shadows of the tropic even fell
A-list'ning to the chiming of the old cathedral bell—
List'ning to that distant bell,
And the sucking, surging swell,
When she'd nestle closer to me, and her love for me she'd
tell,
Down in swelt'ring Panama . . .

Then the stars would start to twinkle in the velvet dome
of night,
And the silent harbour sparkle in the moon's argental
light,
While the inky tropic blackness with the glowing worm
would teem,
Until I thought I'd sure awake and find it all a dream.
Yes, it surely did but seem
Just to be a passing dream,
With the fireflies and the moonlight and the phosphorescent
gleam,
Down in swelt'ring Panama . . .

When a month of toil was over and I'd get my hard-
earned pay,
She'd keep just what was needed and the rest she'd put
away,
That's the reason I am able to be here a-drinking
"cham,"
And a-treating sweet-tongued ladies who for no one care
a damn !

Though they never care a damn,
And their love is all a sham,

There's one I'll bet who loves me yet for what I
really am,
Down in swelt'ring Panama . . .

I have drunk and danced with women till I ache in ev'ry
bone,
And having spent nigh ev'ry cent they've left me on mine
own,
Yet there's a truer maiden in a fairer land I know,
Who'd stick by me through thick and thin, in happiness
or woe,—

Earning little years ago,
When our funds were getting low,

She'd twine her arms around my neck, and set my heart
aglow,
Down in swelt'ring Panama . . .

Now I've squandered all my savings, and I've heard some
people say
That you can't get love on credit round about the Great
White Way,

So I'm going back, God grant it, to the sweetest girl by
far,

Who is waiting for my coming 'neath the palms of
Panama.

Down in swelt'ring Panama,

Where the exiled gringoies are,

And all the lot have surely got their souls as black as tar—

Down in swelt'ring Panama,

'Neath the equatorial star,

Where, gleaming bright, hangs low at night, the Southern
Cross afar.

MAÑANA

IN those little Republics down south of the Zone,
Where each of an army of Generals can boast,
Where each waits a pick of the Treasury bone,
And a President rules for a week at the most,
From the moment the sun tips the high-standing palm,
And the first note is chirped by the earliest bird,
Till the hour when the Luna reigns silent and calm,
You hear e'er repeated one *spigetti*¹ word—
Mañana.

'Tis sown in their minds from the day they are born,
Full quick they acquire a philosophy deep ;
The value of time is a truth which they scorn,
Their lives but an orgy of idling and sleep ;
No hopes to inspire, of ambition bereft,
They lazily dream as the years roll away,
Excuses abundant for work to be left,
Till the slow-coming dawn of that mystical day—
Mañana.

They arise—heavy-eyed—when the morn is far spent,
To the sweltering blaze of a tropical sun,
With nothing accomplished, yet fully content,
Retiring to sleep e'er the evening is done.

¹ Word used to signify anything native.

The women full weary of lolling all day,
Hard striving the god of *siestas*¹ to woo,
While their chivalrous mates in a neigh'bring café
Are gallantly boasting of what they will do—
Mañana.

Amigos,² awaken ! your musings forget,
To lay now a worthy foundation begin,
A name among nations you'll never beget,
As long as you're prone to this deadliest sin ;
And more—when you die and arrive at the gate
Of heaven, your place among angels to claim,
You'll find, as expectant you eagerly wait,
Saint Peter will open the door and exclaim—
Mañana.

¹ Noonday sleep.

² Friends.

THE SOUTHERN TYPHOON

BORN in the depths of darkness, in the long Antarctic
night,
Reared in the mighty cradle of a vastness virgin
white,
Piercing the clouds that bound me at the dawn of a long-
sought day,
Sallying forth with pent-up wrath to speed on my frenzied
way.

Driving the snows before me over the barren plain,
Heaving them high to the glowering sky to be dashed to
the earth again,
Stifling the lone explorer with a blast of my chilly
breath,
Hurling the ice-bound whaler to the jaws of a waiting
death.

Faster and ever faster till the towering mountains
quake,
Stronger and ever stronger till the rising plateaux
shake,
Nothing but desolation as far as the eye can see,
With a deaf'ning roar I leave the shore to spread o'er the
cringing sea.

Lashing its breast in my fury till it shrinks from my
tireless hand
And runs for the rugged shelter of the far-off watching
land,
Flies like a timid maiden from the grip of a fancied
ghost,
To tear itself asunder on the stern, unyielding coast.

With a joyous cry I soon espied, away on the skyline
dim,
The graceful form of a speeding barque—toy for my
present whim ;
Hearing my shout triumphant, inspired by the proffered
sport,
She swiftly turns, as a startled deer, and makes for the
nearest port.

One rush and I overtake her ; she shrinks with a dull
alarm,
Then heels as I dash her from me with a sweep of my
mighty arm,
Again, and I clutch her to me—I can hear her long-drawn
gasp,
And her strong ribs loudly crunching 'neath the power of
my iron grasp.

Those puny human mortals, who Nature's anger brave,
Now cry to their God to snatch them from the brink of a
wat'ry grave,
But I rip the decks asunder with a final shatt'ring blow,
And they sink with the ship they trusted to the claws of
the crabs below.

Onward I speed till the Andes rear up each hoary head,
Clear to that space unending where only the angels tread,
From the crest of their glitt'ring snowfields a challenge to
 all is hurled,
For never have they been conquered, those Kings of the
 Western World.

Dashing myself against them I tear at their ramparts old ;
They answer my youthful howlings with the calm of an
 age untold,
Stemmed are my furious onslights by the strength of
 their bosoms vast,
On those snowbound plains, where the condor reigns, I
 meet with defeat at last.

Thrown from that rocky stronghold I drop to the earth
 below,
To skim o'er the green-clad valleys where westbound
 rivers flow,
Gone is the lust for battle, the strength of my youth is
 spent
Till scarcely the supple bamboo by the force of my blow
 is bent.

I suck the dew from the pastures new, on my lips it is
 borne away
To kiss the flower at the noonday hour, as it droops
 'nearth the glare of day,
To stir the leaves of the listless trees till they nod to the
 setting sun,
And bring relief to the gasping earth ere the reign of the
 moon's begun.

On through the night I travel, over the moonlit land,
Crossing the lonely pampa, ruffling its glist'ning sand,
Stirring the lonely camp-fire till I see by its ruddy
glow

Fresh hope arise in the lost one's eyes as he harks to my
whimperings low.

For a moment brief he sits and stares . . . out through
the rising smoke,

His thirst's forgot and he listens not to the waiting
vulture's croak,

For he sees again a dew-drenched plain, and hears the
swishing mill,

And his haggard face, for the briefest space, with joy
those visions fill.

But ere the breath of another wind can soothe his fevered
head,

His spirit bold will seek the fold of the countless unknown
dead,

While, served by him, the vultures grim their proffered
feast will gain,

And his bones will lie 'neath a blazing sky, a speck on
the stretching plain.

Over the festooned jungle I speed on my northern way,
Waking the chatt'ring monkey as the roof of his home I
sway,

Rousing the shrieking puma to be joined by a thousand
more,

Then all is stilled as the air is filled with a hungry tiger's
roar.

Quickly the dawn of a tropic morn breaks in the garnished
East,
Hid from the glare in his fetid lair slumbers the prowling
beast,
The note is heard of an early bird, the deep green foliage
shakes,
With the rustling sound of a mighty bound the trembling
jungle wakes.

Upwards, now mounting upwards, till I see from a
mountain crest
The first bright ray of the piping day bathing Caribbean's
breast,
The morning star, in its realm afar, melts in the burning
light,
And the yawning West, as it springs from rest, swallows
the conquered night.

Then the fairy touch of a gentle breeze ripples the
placid sea,
And the cadent trill of a gladsome song floats through
the air to me ;
At that welcome sound, with a fleeting bound, from the
mountain-top I glide,
For over the sand of that circling strand frolics my
northern bride.

One fond embrace, then off we race, out from the tranquil
bay,
Which brightly gleams as the amber beams over its bosom
play,

Back once more to the fretful shore we come from our
joyous flight,
To sing a tune to the locked lagoon, ablaze in the
shimmering light.

But my heart's on fire with a great desire, and I long of
that fruit to taste
Which ripens best in the perfumed breast, snow-white, of
a maiden chaste:
I long to fly from the watching eye, far up from the land
and sea,
Till hid from view by that veil of blue, through which
Death alone can see.

So I take my bride in my eager arms—she yields, with a
trembling sigh;
To the hills and plains of the smiling earth I whisper a
last Good-bye,
Then up I soar through a mighty door, which opes in the
clouds above,
To a bridal home in the sapphire dome, alone with my
virgin love.

THE LAND OF COMIC OPERA

(This does not apply to the Reader's own country.)

OF those countries fair near the Tropic Line,
Where the Trade Winds blow and the sun doth
shine,
Their characteristics you well define
By terming them Comic Opera.

For a President now is elected each week,
His many supporters rich offices seek,
Quick causing the Treasury coffers to leak,
In those countries of Comic Opera.

Political Parties hold bitter their strife ;
Though ever true courteous, hypocrisy's rife ;
They proffer their friendship—whilst hiding a knife,
In those regions of Comic Opera.

And fully aware to the height of their lot,
Their Parliament meets, and discussions wax hot
As to whether "buck" niggers wear tall hats or not,
In those cities of Comic Opera.

Consisting their armies of Generals all
(The number of Privates exceedingly small)
With uniforms gorgeous, just fit for a ball,
The same as in Comic Opera.

Full weary of rest a war is begun,
No lives are endangered, and soon it is done,
For shamming to fight and uproarious fun
It certainly beats Comic Opera.

Though law is maintained with abundance of noise,
A criminal hardened full freedom enjoys,
Policemen but venture to "take up" small boys
In those countries of Comic Opera.

They tell the whole world with a din and a blare
Of deeds they've accomplished, and what they will dare,
But don't you believe it—'tis only hot air,
The same as in Comic Opera.

And so they go on from the day of their birth,
Till the last act is o'er and they leave this cold earth
To liven up Hell with hilarious mirth,
By playing at Comic Opera.

Señores, once more I will give you my views,
'Twixt th' right and th' wrong way of governing choose,
Quit playing at ruling, or some day you'll lose
Your countries of Comic Opera.

THE WHITE CHOLO

HERE I squat on a floor of mud,
In the reek of a filthy den,
And walling round are those of my blood
To the healthy tune of ten ;
None of them like to the other,
All of them different shades,
Though her, whom they know as mother,
Is as black as the ace of spades.

I guess I'm as low as man can go,
Stamped with the devil's brand,
Yet, what does it matter? . . . they ne'er shall know
Back in my native land ;
My *chola*¹ wife, with her grimy face
And her oily, ebony hide,
Would seem somehow to be out of place
In a flat on the Riverside.

It sure is sometimes hell to think
(Though it's seldom that I do)
How my haughty bygone friends would shrink
At the thing I am married to.
Well ! here I am—condemned to stay,
Lord of this lousy sty,
But I'd give my soul to see Broadway
Once more before I die.

¹ Indian.

I reckon I've only myself to blame
For the most of what's occurred,
Yet I wouldn't have sunk to these depths of shame
If *she* had been true to her word ;
How woman's the victim, the writers tell
In their public-pandering way,
But women have oft but dross to sell,
Yet the fool of a man must pay.

However, there's but one life to live,
And most of it's filled with pain,
Though there's nothing on earth I wouldn't give
To live it over again.
Thank God ! there's plenty of brandy raw
Left in the bottle yet,
Soon, drunk, I'll crawl to my bed of straw
To sleep awhile . . . and forget.

EL MESTIZO

(*The Half-Caste.*)

IN Peru I met and knew him,
As the biggest rogue on earth,
For in sin and crime he'd wallowed
Since his mother gave him birth ;
And they called him "El Mestizo"—
No one knew his mongrel race,
There were traces of four nations
In his evil-looking face.
A sorry sight to gaze on
From his head down to his feet,
With a filthy, ragged *poncho*¹
His whole wardrobe was complete ;
And he never could keep sober,—
He'd have pledged his soul for drink,—
His breath for everlasting
Did of native *chicha*² stink.

He was drunk when first I saw him,
Lying stretched upon the ground
In a mantle of mosquitoes,
With the sand-crabs crawling round ;

¹ Riding cloak.

² Beer.

And as with my foot I roused him,
 His profane words filled the air—
 As an expert in vile language,
 No one to him could compare.
 Yes, he was that old Mestizo,
 Full despised by one and all,
 Who in deepest degradation
 Was as low as man could fall :
 He had not a friend to turn to,
 Not a person cared a jot
 If he left this earth to-morrow,
 Drawn and quartered, hung or shot.

Still *I* never shall forget him,
 And the first place in my heart
 Will be for that old Mestizo
 Until I this life depart.
 But you'll wonder why . . . I'll tell you :
 Covered by that dirty hide
 Was the finest pal I know of,
 With a heart of gold inside.
 He was only old Mestizo,
 With his blood of mongrel breed,
 Yet he proved himself a hero
 And the truest friend in need.

It was in the long dry season
 When the sun beats scorching down,
 And the hot winds sweep the *pampas*¹
 Parching everything around,

¹ Wide stretching plains.

That I rode from Guay to Piura,
Across that sun-baked plain,
And as a mule attendant
I'd Mestizo in my train.
He would work while I was watching,
But as soon as I turned round
He'd get that native *chicha*
And he'd pour it steady down.
And although I kicked and cursed him
It was all of little use,
In his sordid way of living
He'd got hardened to abuse ;
Till one day in desperation,
I gave him twenty full,
Then with myuzzling *lasso*
Tied him to the hindmost mule.

From early dawn to sundown,
As he staggered in our rear,
We could hear him crying, begging,
Pleading for that native beer.
But not a drop we gave him
Though his tongue grew twice its size,
And the tortures of a madd'ning thirst
Glared from his bloodshot eyes.
He was only old Mestizo,
Who cared if he lived or died ?
If he dropped dead by the sand-trail
Not a man would turn aside.

One night, a long march over,
Tired and weary I lay down,

When from my restless slumbers
I was wakened by the sound
Of my muleteers preparing
For what seemed another ride,
So my usual morning orders?
To the leading guide I cried,
When I felt a cold steel muzzle
Pressed hard against my breast.
Instinct told me if I whimpered
I'd have sought eternal rest ;
And a *cholo*¹ stood astride me,
Murder gleaming from his eyes,
Such a look of direst hatred
Not the bravest would despise.
With a devilish grin he told me
That they'd robbed all that I'd got,
And abandoned in that desert
Was to be my dreadful lot.

Still, another choice they gave me :
If I longed sweet Heaven to gain,
They would help me on the journey
With a bullet in my brain.
But I declined this offer,
For life is always sweet,
While breath stays in the body
Nature fails to see defeat.
So they stripped me bare to nature,
Binding tight my hands and feet,
And without drink, food, or cov'ring,
Left me in that burning heat.

¹ Indian (Peru).

There I lay, intently list'ning,
Till their voices died away,
Then despair filled my whole being,
And I cried for them to stay.
For was not a bullet better
Than a long-drawn tortuous death ?
So I cried till hoarseness stopped me—
But I might have saved my breath,
For the vultures' hideous croaking,
As they specked the cloudless sky,
Was the only answer given
To my last despairing cry.
There I lay ; the fiery sun's blaze
Boiled my very blood within,
And the sand-ants crawling o'er me
Slowly ate into my skin.
Then I felt my parched throat tighten,
And began that raving thirst
Which eclipsed all other tortures,
Of my suff'rings 'twas the worst.

I prayed, cried, groaned, and blasphemed,
Till delirium filled my brain,
Then I thought myself transplanted
To my dear homeland again :
I could hear the old brook babbling,
I could see the fountain play,
And the waterfall dash downwards ;
Then that vision passed away,
And I stood upon the borders
Of a glistening, limpid lake,

EL MESTIZO

I knelt down, with eager longing,
 My maddening thirst to slake,
When the vision quickly faded,
 And I saw a crystal spring
Gush from the sand ; . . . towards it,
 I tried myself to fling,
When a flame of fire shot upwards,
 All around seemed turned to red,
And I thought instead of water
 I was drinking molten lead,
Which pounded through my body,
 Scorching, burning every vein,
And great drops with hell's fire heated
 Slowly ate into my brain.

Then a thrill ran through my body,
 For I dimly felt a hand
Pressed gently 'neath my shoulders,
 Raising me from off the sand,
And a cooling precious liquid
 Soothed my aching throat and breast.
Then I must have promptly fainted,
 For I knew not of the rest
Till I woke in blissful comfort
 Lying stretched upon a bed,
With a doctor bending o'er me
 Pressing ice-cloths to my head.
Then I learnt how I was rescued,
 How once more I came to live,
How another of God's creatures
 His own life for me did give.

They had found me on the sand-trail,
Lying there, close to my side,
Was the corpse of old Mestizo
Huddled, naked as he'd died.
And around my blistered body
Was a dirty, filthy rag,
Also resting on my shoulder
Was an empty water-bag,
And on El Mestizo's forearm
Was a gash where he had bled,
While around his mouth and nostrils
There appeared bright stains of red.

Need the story be unfolded?
Such a tale all hearts must wrench :
He had sucked his very life-blood
His own raving thirst to quench ;
While he gave me all the water,
Also stripped his body bare,
To protect me with his *poncho*
From the blazing sun's fierce glare.
How he came to be beside me,
In this life I'll never know ;
Still, he'll tell me all about it
When I meet him down below.
I tried to solve the mystery,
But all efforts proved in vain ;
Incomplete will be this story
Till I see him once again.

On a hillock by that sand-trail,
Stands a cross—a rude affair,

EL MESTIZO

But 'tis ever wreathed in glory,
For a hero's sleeping there.
No need for marble monument
Raised on high to mark the spot,
Hero-like such pomp he'd shrink from,
He would wish his deed forgot.
Still, my thoughts are ever centred
In that far-off lonely grave,
Buried there lies El Mestizo,
He who died my life to save.

THE GRINGO

YOU'LL encounter a type in your wanderings far,
From storm-swept Magellan to old Panama,
His hide is like leather, his soul black as tar,
And in Spanish they call him a gringo.

He's grim of the face, yet he's soft of the heart,
From the store of adventure full claiming his part—
There isn't a speck on the southern chart
Untrod by the foot of a gringo.

His morals are not what you'd find in a saint,
His knowledge of Scripture's decidedly faint,
But of fear and of lying he bears not a taint,
And he'll stick to his friends, will the gringo.

He's fond of the ladies—got sweethearts galore,
By difference in colour he places no store,
But never forgets 'twas a woman who bore
That man now matured to a gringo.

Being thick of the skin, you may poison the air,
And call him a son of—whate'er you may care,
But SMILE WHEN YOU SAY IT, or, if NOT, BEWARE !
He reckons life cheap does the gringo.

His manners are rough, he's a beggar to drink,
And down to the depths of the wretched may sink,
But from one act of meanness to others he'd shrink,
He's true to the core is the gringo.

High up on the peaks where the earth stretches white,
Far down on the plains where the sweat blinds your
sight,
Wherever mankind with stern Nature must fight
You'll find the opponent a gringo.

When the darkest of jungles is cleared from the ground,
And the highest of mountains eventually crowned,
'Neath the oozing black slime or the snows will be found
The bones of a wandering gringo.

He carries his flag to the ends of the earth,
He's building up fame for the land of his birth,
So, those who sit snugly at home by the hearth,
Just take off your hats to the gringo !

COUSINS

SIDE by side we work together
Remnants of a fevered band,
Each a fortune-seeking gringo
Exiled from his native land ;
Each to each in truest friendship
Stretching forth a helping hand,
For we're Cousins.

While at home they scoff at England
Or abuse the mighty States,
While those lying politicians
Stir the flame of petty hates,
They forget about us gringoes
Who live here as loving mates,
Don't they, Cousin ?

We have pierced the festooned jungle,
We have laid the magic rail,
Yea, as comrades true together,
We have trod life's rugged trail ;
So those "stay-at-homes'" endeavours
To divide us now will fail,
Won't they, Cousin ?

When across the wide Atlantic
They descend to throwing mud,
And the papers help the ragings
Of a friendship-drowning flood,
We, the Exiles, scorn such pratings,
For we know the worth of blood,
Don't we, Cousin ?

They were never stretched in suff'ring,
Far remote from home and friends,
Where the hum of foreign jargons
With one's fevered ravings blends ;
Know they not that God-sent comfort
Which a Cousin's presence lends
To a Cousin.

We have pitched our tents together,
From the selfsame dish we've fed,
Back to back when aught assailed us
For a common cause we've bled,
We have gloried in our triumphs,
Manly tears of grief we've shed
O'er a Cousin.

Here a gringo is a gringo,
There is neither boast nor sham,
Be he from the Mother Country
Or the land of Uncle Sam;
Union Jack or Spangled Banner,
Well, it matters not a damn,
We are Cousins.

THE CALL OF THE SOUTH

FROM those peaks which pierce the vastness,
Where the snows commune with silence,
Where the ceaseless hum of Life has failed to reach ;
From the wide majestic uplands
And the savage godless jungle,
From the nodding palms which skirt the shelving beach,
Comes a whisper faint and fleeting,
Quick it sets the pulses beating
Of those gringoes who have learnt to understand :
'Tis a *something* heart-elating,
Like a lover's voice vibrating,
'Tis a luring call from out the Southern Land.

And it ne'er will brook resistance,
'Tis of tense, lifelong persistence,
It hast cast o'er us a spell, and yield we must
To its soul-uplifting clamour,
To its weird, entralling glamour,
To that feeling strange men call the wanderlust.
Restless sons of ev'ry nation
Long have known its fascination,
It has drawn them from the farthest ends of earth ;
Not the sleek, whom wealth entices,
Nor the scum exiled for vices,
But th' ones who strive for fame—the men of worth.

They are sweating in the denseness
Of an Ecuadorian forest,
Where fever's deadly strongholds they assail ;
Tow'ring mountains know their daring,
You will see their camp-fires flaring
'Long the windings of a bleak Bolivian trail.
Having cast all ties behind 'em,
On a Chilian waste you'll find 'em,
Where the solitude eternal turns you dumb ;
'Tis not selfish greed enslaving,
But a fierce rebellious craving—
'Tis the yearning call of Space which bids them come.

It is calling, ever calling,
Faintly comes the distant echo
Of that voice which stirs the blood of those who roam ;
. For it tells the wondrous story
Of proud Nature in her glory,
Of sun and moon, of stars and velvet dome.
Telling tales of paths untravelled,
Hidden mysteries unravelled,
Of sickness dire, uncared for and alone ;
Of graves in unknown places ;—
Whilst they hark with eager faces,
The mystic South has claimed them for its own !

LITANY OF THE TROPICAL TRAMPS

(By a dyspeptic grumbler.)

O Lord, although we've wandered from Thy
Christian soldiers' camps,
And deserve the reputation of incorrigible scamps,
Although but hardened sinners whom they call the Tropic
Tramps,

Yet hear Our Prayer !

From officialdom of Customs, that deeply braided
band,
Whose weird gesticulations you fail to understand,
Who drive you sheer to madness the day when first you
land,

Good Lord, deliver us.

From that pompous port commander, ruler of the braided
race,
Swollen up with self-importance, covered deep with
golden lace,
With the signs of many vices written on his swarthy
face,

Good Lord, deliver us.

From the snares of black-faced porters who meet you on
the shore,
And greet each simple gringo with one ear-splitting roar
(They know they're sure to "fleece" him of all he's got
and more),

Good Lord, deliver us.

From the wiles of thieving coachmen who charge you
treble fare,

Who seem to think each gringo a bloated millionaire,
And should you dare dispute it, with curses rend the air,

Good Lord, deliver us.

From the care of hotel waiters, the keenest of their
kind,

Who *sure* expect you'll tip them before you've even
dined,

And strut about like monkeys with shirt-tails out behind,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From the yellow heathen Chinee who to your wash
attends,

Who badly spoken Spanish with pidgin-English blends,
Who "sticks" you twice the tariff, and then your cloth-
ing rends,

Good Lord, deliver us.

From the crowds of filthy beggars who for *centavos*² plead,
At whose persistent wailing the hardest heart would bleed,
Who transmit crawling vermin of ev'ry size and breed,

Good Lord, deliver us.

¹ Cents.

From the swarms of small mosquitoes which crown one's
fevered head,

From the fleas and bugs in armies which patrol one's
heated bed,

Causing deep and lurid curses which were better left
unsaid,

Good Lord, deliver us.

From the clanging of the church bells e'er the infant day
is born,

From the wailing loud of donkeys sounding like a rasping
horn,

From the weird and deaf'ning noises which comprise a
tropic morn,

Good Lord, deliver us.

From the many cocktails taken to revive one's appetite,

From the "punches" of the morning and the "highballs"
strong of night,

From the dreadful lust of gambling till the early morning
light,

Good Lord, deliver us.

From the meals with garlic reeking of the hotel's greasy
chef,

From the Passion of the Tropics and the fever's
poisonous breath,

From diseases (best not mentioned) which result in early
death,

Good Lord, deliver us.

THE GRINGO'S LAMENT

TAKE me away from the city gay, with its endless
 rush and roar,
Fair to the eye of the passer-by, cankering at its core,
God ! how I hate these men innate, with manliness
 erased,
Their fitting mates but fashion plates, with the human
 form effaced !

Take me away from the Great White Way, where teeming
 millions tread,
Far from the sound of the Underground, and the whirl of
 the Overhead,
Far from the taint of that clouded view, and narrow mind
 begat,
By the soulless, spineless, humdrum life of a modern
 up-town flat.

Give me a hut by a coral strand, where the palms in
 clusters grow,
A tropic night with the stars alight and the phosphor
 gleam aglow,
The murmur low of the lapping waves, the song of the
 surging swell,
And bellbirds weird in a neighbouring grove, chiming
 their midnight knell.

What do I care for the swagger fare of a high-toned
restaurant,
Or dinners glum where I listen dumb to a chattering
debutante?
Tired I am of the taste of cham'—and the perfumed fat
cigar,
Of lolling around, like a king uncrowned, in a high-priced
motor-car.

Send me back o'er a mountain track, from dawn till the
day is done,
Where the lone reply to your hunger's cry is the bark of
a trusty gun ;
Cast me adrift where the sandhills shift to the play of a
pampa breeze,
With a thirst to raise, and a trail to blaze, and a bronco
'twixt my knees.

Ever I yearn for a quick return to that land of the sunsets
red,
Where the amber dawn, as a startled fawn, leaps from its
prairie bed ;
The noonday glare I'll gladly bear, and, when the night
lies down,
Held to its breast I'll peaceful rest away from New York
Town.

THE WOOINGS OF A GRINGO

’T WAS coming out West as a youngster,
My experience of women begun,
The teacher—a year or so widow,
Heart-broken, attractive, and young.
And I but a stripling from college,
To the wiles of her sex I was new,
Eyes pleading and wet, I was caught in the net,
And she taught me the first that I knew.

The next was a hot-blooded creole
Aglow with the fire of the South,
Dark hair like the wing of a raven,
Bright eyes, and a rosy-lipped mouth.
She gave me first lessons in Spanish,
Her voice like the coo of a dove,
Though a duffer to learn I was quick to discern,
So she taught me instead about love.

I encountered the next in Havana
(That land of the five-pointed star),
A-sitting alone in the *plaza*,¹
Slow puffing a *concha* cigar ;
Curiosity’s glance in the passing,
Returned by a passionate look,
“ *Que haces mulata?* ” “ *Tienes tu plata?* ”—
And I added a page to my book.

¹ City square.

Then later I shipped to the Isthmus,
 That zone of mad bustle and rush,
 And there met an innocent *gringa*,—
 Yea, one of the few who could blush.
 Yet I, from experience with others,
 Was fool to consider her such,
 She managed to thwart me, and clearly she taught me,
 That women can differ in much.

And then came a sloe-eyed *Limeña*¹
 Who had me completely bewitched—
 A packet of endless surprises,
 A tigress and lamb intermixed.
 How fiercely she loved—ah, how loving !
 But jealousy came in between,
 And it finished in strife when she marked me for life
 With a thrust from her dagger blade keen.

The next was a girl of the jungle,
 Who never by man had been sought,
 Her knowledge what instinct had taught her,
 And mine what I dearly had bought.
 But when it arrived at love-making
 She beat me by miles at the game,
 So I'm prone to believe that her ancestress Eve
 Was the one and the only to blame.

Then followed a maiden of Mayfair,
 Perfection in culture and grace ;
 Though her manner was highly effusive,
 Hypocrisy lurked in her face.

¹ Girl of Lima,

Her beauty and innocence studied,
Full many admirers beguiled ;
But deep down below, she never, I know,
Could compare with that girl of the wild.

And so end the tales of my wooings
(At least all of them I recall),
Except for the one that proved final,
The truest and purest of all.

I had thought that most women were nothing
But playthings in moments of mirth,
Then she entered my life, soon I made her my wife,
And she's taught me what women are worth.

PANAMA

THE WAIL OF A LIVERISH GRINGO

I DON'T know if you know it,
That land of fiery heat,
Where for scorching up your eyebrows
Not a place on earth can beat.
If you look upon the map you'll find
They call it Panama,
The spot, which for its blinding heat,
Eclipses Hell by far.

You wake up in the morning
And dress yourself perspiring,
The day's work being over
You sweat when on retiring ;
At midday the sun's blazing glare
Seems like a blasted fire,
Of such a sizzling, swelt'ring clime
The devil himself would tire.

To sleep at night's impossible,
Full wide awake you lie,
Watching the flying cockroach,
Catching the buzzing fly.

At last, when dawn is breaking,
For an hour or so you snore,
Till the braying of a donkey
Brings you back to earth once more.
Then your sweet rest it is ended,
For the church bells start to chime,
And ere they cease their blooming row
To get up it is time.

Oh, why should they a sleepy man
Disturb with such a din ?
Instead of saving him from hell
They drive him farther in.
For I am sure the language
Which pours forth at such a time
Is barred in good society,
And dare not be used in rhyme.

Now the Panamanian people
Have hides of ev'ry shade,
And in those varied-coloured skins
Are men of ev'ry grade :
Americans and Britishers
(Prime factors in the stew),
Spaniard, Greek, and Turk,
Chinaman and Jew—
All mixed up together
In welt'ring perspiration,
Men of all religions,
Sons of ev'ry nation.

'Tis the Hunting-Ground of tourists,
Of gringoes steeped in sin,
Of whisky rank, Balboa beer,
And evil-smelling gin.
Of all the towns upon this earth,
I on my oath will swear
That none where money quickly flows
To Panama compare.

And of one thing I am certain—
That on Resurrection Day,
When the gringoes from sweet Paradise
Are sternly turned away,
That with their hearts a-breaking
They'll not roam this world afar,
But with smiles of satisfaction
They'll go back to Panama.

PRICKLY HEAT

DOWN South'rn on the swelt'ring Tropic Zone,
Where day and night one's body's steeped in sweat,
There's a torture to which gringoes all are prone,
And, having it, the others they forget.

'Tis neither vile Bubonic,
Yellow Fever, nor the Vomit—
It's got those dread diseases fairly beat,
For the torture past comparing
To which now I am referring
Is what we gringoes call the Prickly Heat.

It begins with ruddy pimples—just a few,
But rapidly it spreads and forms a patch,
While its lightning growth amazes, it is hurting you like
blazes,
And it's always in a place you cannot scratch.

'Neath the tropic sun-glare burning,
Through the dark nights restless turning,
You claw your body o'er from head to feet—
Tortures vile, of man's creation,
Rack and gibbet, thirst, starvation,
Are nothing when compared with Prickly Heat.

And a victim can be seen at every turn,
You will know him by the twitchings of his face,
Meeting one of selfsame feather, they will sit for hours
 together,
And scratch with fiendish glee the other's place.

It has no respect of person,
 But alights on Nature's cov'ring
Be he millionaire or beggar in the street ;
 Rich and poor alike are twitching
 With the tantalizing itching
Of that peace-destroying curse—the Prickly Heat.

When we gringoes on our last long journey go,
 And bid farewell to this ungodly Coast,
Our dusky host, who runs the torture show,
 Won't put us on a blazing fire to roast :

Such a false hope may be scooted,
 For Old Nick will do his duty,
And choose the punishment our sins to meet,
 So we all will be presented,
 Till each one has sore relented,
With a rattling, rousing dose of Prickly Heat.

THE BEACH-COMBER

IN Callao Port I met him,
Lying backwards on a seat
In that tiny seaside plaza
Where all West Coast "wrecks" do meet.
'Neath the cooling shade afforded
By the spreading palma trees,
With his feet stretched on the pathway,
Lolling there in blissful ease.

Long he watched the tranquil harbour
Sparkle in the glare of day,
Where proud ships of ev'ry nation
Peaceful at their anchors lay ;
Then his eyes turned somewhat dreamy
As he gazed far out to sea—
A Philosopher on Idling
Wrapt in deepest reverie.

A battered felt sombrero
From which colour long had fled,
With its rim a tattered ribbon,
Crowned his matted, unwashed head ;
While his face, with liquor bloated,
From soap's application free,
Bore red fest'ring scars upon it,
Honours of a drunken spree.

And a beer-stained old *bandana*,¹
Once a striking, blazing check,
Faded now from all its glory,
Lent protection to his neck ;
While his ragged coat and trousers
Gave free passage to the breeze,
With an entrance at his elbows
And an exit at his knees.

Worn-out boots let in the sunlight
To his feet, which, caked with earth,
Like his face, for years unbroken
Had survived a water-dearth.
There he sat—a “down-and-outer,”
Hopeless, lost, devoid of shame,
Any trace of honour vanished,
Without country, creed, or name.

As I took a seat near by him,
Lazily he turned his head,
Then perceiving me a gringo
O'er his face a new light spread.
That “new light” came from the glowing
Of a fervent hope, I think,
That before I'd left the plaza
He'd have “touched” me for a drink.

Quick abandoning his musings,
O'er his wrist for luck he spat,
And from the seat arising
Shuffling came to where I sat.

¹. Scarf.

But I fled as he approached me,
Yet his curses reached mine ear,
As he saw the chance he'd staken on
Of a free drink disappear.

Yes ! I left that old beach-comber
In that plaza by the sea,
Where no doubt he still continues
In his constant reverie,
Till he tires of doing nothing,
And departs from off this earth,
To where, if I mistake not,
He will prove of better worth.

Where they'll keep him constant at it
And won't give him time to tire,
In the foremost rank hard sweating
He will stack the blazing fire ;
While the devil will, I reckon,
Prod his hide if he should shirk,
And at last, in burning Hades,
He will learn what 'tis to work.

A WANDERER'S DAY

I WAKE at dawn and stir the dying embers
To cook the contents of my old canteen—
Rough, hardened fare—how keenly one remembers
Those bygone days, and thinks *what might have
been.*

Recalling scenes where shady pathways winded,
Of meadows green where rippling brooklets run,
And—here I am, by perspiration blinded,
Plodding along beneath a blistering sun.

A midday halt, in thicket gloom reposing
Where sunbeams chase each other to and fro,
Contented, musing half, and half a-dozing,
I listen to the bellbird chiming low ;
Then falls a silence, stagnant and oppressive,
When nothing stirs, from plain to distant peak,
A stillness strange, as coming death impressive,
Until it seems that God must surely speak.

I watch the sun go down in wondrous splendour,
As cooling winds disperse the sweltring heat,
And then the moon appears, so soft and tender,
A crescent pale, beneath Madonna's feet.

The clustering stars from daydreams now awaken
To gleam in teeming millions overhead,
Whilst, down below, the forest depths are shaken
By prowling beasts, which fill the night with dread.

By jungle track, where stealthy forms are creeping,
When cold the air of tropic night has grown,
I build my fire, whilst all the world's a-sleeping,
And crouch beside it, weary and alone.
The curling smoke, up to the night ascending
Shapes, to my gaze, a form divinely fair,
Then, flippant ever, with the darkness blending,
Leaves me to wakened sorrow and despair.

A wanderer's day, far from the city faring,
Far from the haunts of luxury and ease,
Toiling beneath a sun for ever glaring,
Meeting alone dire dangers and disease.
No thought of gain, no bid for admiration,
As those who strive the heights of fame to scale ;
Only a fight 'gainst sickness, thirst, starvation,
Only a grave beside a lonely trail.

THE GREENHORN

YOU will know him if you meet him—
He is always spick and span,
Riding pants and polished leggings,
With his boots a lurid tan ;
Burnished spurs and wide sombrero,
With a shooter at his hip,
Striving hard to bring to daylight
Hidden hairs upon his lip.

Always boasting of his country,
Knowing more than all the rest,
Drinking deep to keep his end up,
While the liquor burns his chest.
Talking loud of all his exploits
And the men he's filled with lead,
'Till I've often sat and wondered
Where this "hero" hides his dead.

He's for ever loud professing
All that's native-made to hate,
Full despising all around him,
Mourning o'er his present fate,
As he talks of "days at college,"
And the "good old times" at home,
'Till it's seemed to me a pity
That his mother let him roam.

Soon you'll know the spot he hails from,
For of English pride he stinks—
Not a place on earth like England,
So this greeny-greenhorn thinks.
He should think—the son of Adam—
Ere he opens his mouth to speak,
How he slaved in "Good Old England"
Earning twenty bob a week.

He forgets about the office
Where he sat from morn till night,
Striving for a weekly pittance,
Body cramped and aching sight ;
Where he saw his fellow-workers,
Weak of chest with rounded back,
With starvation's ghost before them
Should they chance to get the sack.

He forgets about the climate
With its snow, its sleet and rain,
Where the sun does shine but seldom,
And the stars come out in vain ;
Where the sky is always clouded,
And foul smoke does fill the air ;
Where petty pride and poverty
Surrounds one everywhere.

Ere another year quick passes
O'er the greeny-greenhorn's head,
He will cease to curse the country
Where he earns his daily bread.

He will quit his polished leggings
For a hide of tougher wear,
And he'll find that burnished "teasers"
Quickly rust in open air.

Should he need to draw his shooter
(Though the chances are remote),
He will find it's just as handy
Hidden underneath his coat.
Riding pants and wide sombrero
Will be much the worse for wear,
And, his efforts proving fruitless,
He will shave his *cara*¹ bare.

He will change his yellow *botas*²
For a pair of duller tan,
And he'll cease to oft remind you
He was born an Englishman ;
And at last he'll learn, this greenhorn,
There are other spots on earth
Which are equal, if not better,
To the land that gave him birth.

¹ Face.

² Boots.

ADVICE

‘T IS a cold hard world, as you’ve all found out,
You stand on your feet to be knocked about,
And get darn all if you start to shout,
But the jeers of the jostling throng.
Yet there are times in this ruthless fight
(Though most of us think that Might is Right)
When the bitterest man finds some delight
In helping another along.

There are different ways of helping one :
There’s the rich, who think it’s the greatest fun,
And visit the poor of a sodden slum
In a stylish motor-car ;
Who head the list of a charity ball,
And from the housetops loudly call,
That the wondrous fact may be known to all
What generous folks they are.

Yet I wouldn’t give two hurrahs in hell
For those who *must* of their helping tell,
Who on the acts of their kindness dwell,
Expecting a neighbour’s praise.

But give me the one who will share his crust
With a fellow-man who is badly “bust,”
And from the slime and the choking dust
His fallen brother raise.

And not a whisper of what he’s done,
Trying the thanks of the world to shun,
Treating it all as a game he’s won

Where his partner shares the gain.
That is a man whom you’d call a friend,
Who’d stick by you to the bitter end,
The Wrong oppose and the Right defend,
The cause of the weak maintain.

Now women there are (and I’ve known a lot)—
Who judge man’s worth by the purse he’s got,
But, down-and-out, he is soon forgot

And placed in the “has been” fold.
Give me the girl whose heart is true,
Whose side you seek when things turn blue,
And, come what may, sticks fast by you—
She’s worth her weight in gold.

A worthy prize in the game of life,
A jewel rare where shams are rife,
The kind, my boy, to be one’s wife,
To mother a future home.

The others are pastes of the cheapest make,
They sparkle awhile, yet prove a fake,
With hearts as cold’as a falling flake,
The good wine’s tasteless foam.

Never you judge by outward show,
The rarest flowers well sheltered grow,
So look for the beauty that's hid below,

The mind of a woman scan.

Don't place a man by his wealth or birth,
But value each as each one is worth,
Remember, the noblest thing on earth
Is an upright, clean-cut man !

THE COAST

STRETCHING due south the Equator,
Swept by a mountainous swell,
Mixture of pampa and jungle,
Where gringoes and centipedes dwell,
Cursed by all manner of fevers,
Hotter and drier than Hell—
Is the Coast.

Seaports where life is a burden
Menaced by typhoid and stinks,
Home of the “down-and-the-outer,”
Of bleary beach-combers and “ginks,”
Where the only diversions for gringoes
Are loving, and gambling, and drinks—
On the Coast.

Streets that are narrow and winding,
Filled with a garlicky smell,
House of 'dobe and mortar,
Windows barred up like a cell,
Eyes which are flashing behind them,
Helping to strengthen the spell
Of the Coast.

Days when the mercury rises
To ninety and nine in the shade,
Ev'nings when landscape and ocean
In crimson and gold are arrayed,
Nights when the heavenly ceiling
With glittering star-dust's inlaid—
On the Coast.

Deserts which stretch to the skyline,
Where glimmering mirages glow,
Mountains which rise to the vastness
Crowned with a halo of snow,
Rivers abounding in reptiles,
Meandering sluggish and slow
To the Coast.

Mosquitoes that threaten to eat you,
Flies which you slay with delight,
Sand-crabs which come out to greet you,
Dogs that attack you on sight,
Burros that wake you at dawning,
Fleas which disturb you at night—
On the Coast.

Paths that are rearing like stairways
Up to God's heavenly gates,
Or winding through death-laden jungles
To haunts where the rattler awaits,
O'er pampa and prairie, where exiles
Are sharing the direst of fates
On the Coast.

Only a year since I left it,
When deeply and grimly I swore
That never again would I venture
To live on that sweltering shore ;
But somehow there's *something* that calls me,
So back I am going once more
To the Coast.

SONG

THE TYPICAL TROPICAL TRAMP

I 'LL sing you the song of a typical type
You'll meet on the Tropical Belt,
His cherished belongings a well-seasoned pipe,
A Colt and *sombrero*¹ of felt.
The rest it don't matter, as long as he's got
A garment to cover his skin,
Somewhere to slumber, with something to eat,
And the price of a swallow of gin.

Chorus—

Tramp . . . Tramp . . . Tramp . . .
The Typical Tropical Tramp,
In *café* or *casa*,² in park or in *plaza*,³
You'll meet with this wandering scamp ;
Content with his lot, for he don't care a jot,
No hardships his feelings can damp,
So I'm happy, by jingo, to call him a gringo,
This Typical Tropical Tramp.

You'll see him perhaps in the glare of daylight
On a narrow Peruvian street ;
On a Chilian trail in the dead of the night
By his camp-fire this gringo you'll meet ;

¹ Wide hat.

² House.

³ Square (Spanish).

In wild Ecuador or on Panama's shore,
Where'er or whate'er is his lot,
You'll find him a sport, and a jolly good sort,
In spite of the name that he's got.

Chorus.

He's a devil to fight and a beggar to booze,
A leader in going the pace,
But a comrade true blue when your spirits fast ooze,
As Death stares you grim in the face.
Eternally damned, for in sin he is steeped
From the crown of his head to his feet,
Yet I don't care a rap, he's a jolly good chap,
Yes—one of the best you could meet.

Chorus.

THE GRINGO CEMETERY

AS you take the road to Lima
From Callao on your right,
You will see a cemetery
Bounded by a *muro*¹ white.
On the slope of Bellavista
Looking out towards the West,
That's the spot—their labours ended—
Where the gringoes lie at rest.

You approach its sacred precincts
By an avenue of trees,
Whose leaves so gently swaying
In the passing upland breeze
Seem in low and mournful murmurs
To offer up a prayer
For the souls of the departed,
Who asleep are lying there.

It was when the day was closing
That I sought that sacred place,
And the sun so quickly dipping
Turned to gold the ocean's face ;

¹ Wall.
120

While the housetops of Callao
Glistened in the dazzling light,
And the churchyard's walls reflected
Back to heaven the sunbeams bright.

Ah ! that spot—a perfect garden,
With each grave a bed of flowers,
Where the palma tall and stately
O'er each silent *tumba*¹ towers.
As I wandered down its pathways
On each side inscriptions told
Of those sons of many nations
Gathered to their Father's fold.

And the rays so soft and tender,
Like to fairy visions crept
Round those monuments erected
Marking where those gringoes slept—
Rugged blocks of cold grey granite,
Hewed in Scotland stern and wild,
Polished slabs of blood-red marble
From Italia soft and mild.

Sons of Scotland, sons of England,
With their cousins o'er the sea,
Germans, Frenchmen, Jews, Italians,
Joined by death in unity.
In their earthly lives divided,
Born of diff'rent creed and race,
Yet by solemn death united
In that small allotted space.

¹ Tomb.

Long I lingered till the Luna
Turned each tomb a spectre white,
And the glitt'ring sky was studded
By those beacons of the night ;
Then I slow took my departure
While mine eyes with tears were dim,
From my lips the breeze of even
Bore away a parting hymn.

Many sons of many nations,
Men of station low and high,
Sleeping there, all on an equal,
In a foreign soil they lie.
Diff'rent men of speech and custom
When this suff'ring earth they trod,
They will all be classed as brothers
When they rise to meet their God.

MEMORIES

DEAR old pal, do you remember when we roamed
the Southland over
From blazing Panama down to the Horn ?
On the brink of manhood verging, with the red blood
through us surging,
'Long the pathways of adventure were we borne.
Then we knew no days of sorrow, thoughtless ever of
the morrow,
We wandered on where fickle fortune led,
Now our day grows quickly dimmer, and life's spark is
but a glimmer ;
Yet, pal of mine, those mem'ries are not dead.

In my fancy we are sweating once again by Chagres River,
Where we pierced the festooned jungle through and
through ;
Or we're tramping 'cross the moorlands of that bleak,
storm-swept Magellan,
Where the blizzards of Antarctic fiercely blew.
Comes to mind the arid pampa where we trekked, athirst
and weary,
Beneath the glare of that eternal sun ;
And by Guaya, gently flowing, I can see our camp-fires
glowing
As we smoked a fragrant pipe when day was done.

Do you ever think, old comrade, of those sun-baked dusty cities,

Of narrowed streets wherein strange odours dwell,
Of plazas cool at ev'ning, when the blaring bands were playing,

And nightly "jags" when fairly raised we hell?
Those were times when nothing mattered, joys and hardships shared together,

Thoughts of love, of sweet romance and deadly strife,
Though with Fate we oftentimes sported, and grim Death by us was courted,

Yet, comrade mine, we drank the wine of Life!

And those strange, enchanted islands, with the ripened fruit in plenty,

Where each of us ensnared a dusky queen,
The hours of fervent rapture, and of *dolce far niente*,¹

Those nights of dazzling stars and silver sheen.
O'er the surf-drenched reefs of coral where the oily swell is surging,

A scented breeze is straying to and fro,
And it softly keeps repeating to the combers, shoreward fleeting,

Those heart-entralling tales of long ago.

Now, descending to the valley where deep shadows are appearing,

The peaks of youth and strength seem far away,
Still, in my mind's reflection, I can see them stately rearing,

It seems as if we scaled them yesterday.

¹ Sweet idleness.

But our journey's almost ended ; soon, when Death's
dark veil is rended,

Together we will face the Great High Boss,
So, 'ere leave of earth is taken, here's to Friendship ne'er
forsaken !

Adiós, my loyal comrade ; adiós !

LURE OF THE TROPICS

WHEN you're sitting alone with the curtains drawn tight,
To keep out the chill of a blustering night,
When you listen, 'tween lulls, to the hard-driven rain,
As it patters aloud on your room's window-pane,
How your thoughts they return to those days long ago,
Again a voice calls, which 'tis hard to withstand,
Strong enters the lure of that sun-bedecked land,
Where the tall waving palm and the mango trees grow.

What pictures you see of those times that are gone—
Of dawns, when the rays kissed the lingering dew,
Of nights, when the moon o'er *laguna*¹ bright shone,
And stars glowed like gems in a casket of blue ;
Fair scenes with their beauty before you unfold,
Arise to your nostrils the smells of a camp,
As dear to the heart of a Tropical Tramp
As powder and smoke to a warrior old.

Once more you are hearing the donkey's loud bray
Which heralds the birth of a tropical day,
Again softly echoes the *cholo's*² weird song
As guiding his pack-train he shuffles along ;

¹ Lagoon.

² Indian (Peru).

Once more you are feeling the streamlets of sweat
Quick drenching your skin as the sun rises high,
Full casting its blaze from a shimmering sky
On beauties of Nature you'll never forget.

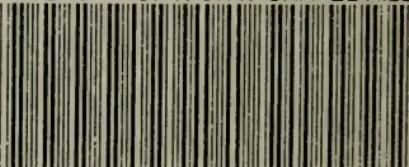
You're plodding again o'er a Chilian trail
With naught but a harsh croaking vulture in sight,
Or list'ning intent to a wanderer's tale
By glowing camp-fires in the stillness of night.
A roar in the forest, a scream on the plain,
A puma's faint cry like a whimpering child—
Those threat'ning and blood-curdling calls of the wild,
Ah, how your ears tingle to hear them again !

Gruff voices of comrades resound in your room,
Familiar old faces look out from the gloom,
And beckon you back to those countries once more,
Of jungle, of mountain, and coral-bound shore.
Their fair panoramas before you unroll,
Escapes from your bosom a deeply drawn sigh,
The truth must be told, though you fain would deny—
The Lure of the Tropics has entered your soul.

VALEDICTORY

I'VE tried to write of matters which I've ponderd,
Of stories I've heard told—of men I've met ;
Of distant lands, where oft I've lonely wandered,
And scenes which I've beheld, ne'er to forget ;
I've tried to tell of living as I've known it,
Nor do my rhymes abound in polished speech,
Yet, for all gringoes, though they may not own it,
Past memories they'll recall—a lesson teach.
And should you o'er one word of mine detain
Then has this work of love been not in vain.

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